

Summer 6-15-2009

# ENG 3806-051: English Romantic Literature

R L. Beebe

*Eastern Illinois University*

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English 3806: English Romantic Literature  
Summer 2009  
Professor R. L. Beebe

Office:	3841 Coleman Hall	<u>Office Hours</u>
Phone:	(O) 581-5013 or 581-2428	M, T, W, R ~ 8:30-10
E-Mail:	rlbeebe@eiu.edu	& by appointment

#### Texts

- Mellor, Anne and Richard Matlak. *British Literature, 1780-1830*. Harcourt Brace, 1996.
- Hays, Mary. *The Victim of Prejudice*. Ed. Eleanor Ty. Broadview Press, 1994.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus*.
- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*.

#### Goals.

This course has three primary goals. The first goal is to read critically and widely from representative figures of the English Romantic period (ca. 1780-1830). The second goal is to work toward some definition of the term "romanticism" (how is the term useful? how is it misleading? what are its central tenets or competing ideas? how has the term influenced our own time?). By realizing the difficulty of this second goal (as well as the need to attempt it), you should leave the class better prepared – and encouraged – to read those many writers not on our list but still important for the time.

The third aim of the course is the broadest, most practical, and probably the most difficult goal: to become more sophisticated and critical readers of creative literature (especially poetry) and its various modes. By critical reader, I mean a reader who not only can follow the basic contours of plot and narrative, but, perhaps more importantly, a reader who can identify nuances of thought and phrase and who can place a text in its historical and literary contexts. We will be reading several genres, of course; however, some of the most challenging and captivating reading in this course lies in the poetry.

#### Requirements.

- |                                              |             |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Weekly Papers - 3 (2-3 pages)              | 30% (@ 10%) |
| • Final Paper (6-8 pages)                    | 15%         |
| • Final exam (comprehensive)                 | 15%         |
| • Response Papers, In-class writing, quizzes | 20%         |
| • Participation                              | 20%         |

**Course Participation.** This is not a lecture course. The format of the course and its overall success depend upon your active and informed contributions. The compressed nature of this four-week course means that we'll be moving quickly through the material, and, since most of

you will be reading these texts for the first time, I expect that you will come to class with lots of questions. Please do. Your questions and comments—even your frustrations with the reading—should form the center of our class discussion. Note that a significant portion of your final grade will be based on your daily contributions and preparation for class.

**Papers.**

Each week (usually on Thursday or Friday), I will give you a topic for you to develop in a relatively short paper (approximately 2-3 pages). The topic will relate to the week's reading and discussion and allow you to revisit relevant texts and ideas. These papers will be due on Monday (during class). Although these papers will not generally require outside research, I encourage you to use all available resources to complete them. Obviously, if you do consult outside sources, you must document carefully, completely, and correctly (use MLA documentation).

For the final paper (approximately 6-8 pages), you will be free to choose the topic. I will hand out some starter or sample topics very soon, and I encourage you to begin planning that paper right away. I strongly encourage you to work with me on these so I can help you narrow your focus or provide primary or secondary resources. I will be discussing this assignment frequently in class and provide more guidelines when I hand out the topic list.

**Late Papers.**

Papers are due on the dates indicated. Papers turned in after the due date will be penalized one-third of a grade for each calendar day they are late—unless you have already made arrangements with me prior to the due date. If a paper is due in class, I will consider it late if you hand it in later in the day.

**Response Papers & In-Class Writing.**

To help focus class discussion, I will frequently give a study question or two for the next day's discussion, and I will ask the class to prepare written responses that will be read in class and also turned in. These responses usually don't need to be longer than a single typed page and should take only a few minutes to read. The questions will usually be specific, so the responses need to be equally specific and detailed. In other words, get to the point quickly and argue vigorously.

For response papers and other in-class writing, I will assign a grade of "Excellent," "Satisfactory," or "Unsatisfactory." Since the point of this activity is to help you think through specific issues and concepts, I'm less interested in the style or formal features of your writing than how you engage the problem. So I won't be evaluating these writings like I do your more formal papers, and therefore I hope you use these as a free space or risk-free opportunity to think through some challenging topics.

**Attendance Policy.** You need to be in class all the time. If you have two unexcused absences, you will likely receive no higher than a C grade—a grade dependent on how well you perform on other course requirements. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

**Students with Disabilities.** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Reading Schedule.** Be prepared to discuss the following works on the date indicated. We may not be able to discuss in class each assigned text; however, you will be expected to have read and be familiar with all the assigned selections unless I indicate otherwise. Although we will try to keep to schedule, modifications are bound to occur, which I will always announce in class. It is your responsibility, however, to keep aware of any changes – especially if you are absent from class.

“a necessary . . . condition for a competent reader of poetry remains – what it has always been – a keen eye for the obvious.”

May

18

Course Introduction

- What is “Romanticism”?
- Contexts 1780-1830
- Discussion of sample poetry (handouts)

19

Historical & Cultural Contexts 1: “French Revolution” (9-12)

- E. Burke (13-19)
- M. Wollstonecraft (20-24)
- T. Paine (25-28)

Historical & Cultural Contexts 2: “The Rights of Woman” (31-33)

- M. Hays (36-41)
- R. Polwhele (42-44)
- M. Wollstonecraft (366-69; 369-70; 371-73; 379-88)

Completed reading schedule will be handed out on Tuesday, May 19th